

Soggy patrol



Tech. Sgt. John M. Foster

Stryker brigade Soldiers with 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., 172nd Inf. Bde., find conditions far from desert-like as they patrol Mosul, Iraq, Feb. 14.

Field manual to get revision

By Robby Kennedy
Army News Service

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. — The Combined Arms Center hosted experts from the CIA, State Department and academia last week during a two-day workshop aimed at providing input to authors rewriting the Counterinsurgency, or COIN, Field Manual, FM 3-24.

The intelligence analysts and experts gathered Feb. 23 - 24 on Fort Leavenworth to work at solving what many of them consider an urgent and acute problem facing the U.S. military today: how to respond to an insurgency.

The new COINFM will contain chapters dealing with operations and operations design, intelligence, indigenous forces, leadership and ethics, logistics and more, said Lt. Col. Jan Horvath, one of the authors of FM 3-24.

“We established that we wanted to do a workshop to bring in some of the best and brightest minds to get input,” said Horvath.

“We tried to write something and get a very accomplished group of people to look at that and tell us what they think of it early on so we can make significant adjustments where they are needed, or adjust and put in nuances,” Horvath said.

An interim COIN manual was

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Lt. Col. Jan Horvath

penned and distributed to the invitees before their arrival at Fort Leavenworth, to give them a chance to consider the suggested doctrine and add their own expertise to the dialogue.

“We pick up a lot of diverse and differing opinions ... sometimes you have two opposing viewpoints,” Horvath said. “There is passion because there is disagreement — that’s why we brought them here, to get a different viewpoint to find out what we’ve missed or what we didn’t consider.”

During the workshop, participants and authors debated or augmented existing ideas, brainstormed new solutions and otherwise expanded the COIN dialogue with the goal of improving the final product to the benefit of Soldiers and commanders

in the field, Horvath said.

“What should we cull from what we have? Can we make it better, or should we move one out and put another one in?” Horvath said. “That’s what all the authors are doing with their discussions, as well as other people throughout the seminar.”

With the U.S. military heavily engaged in counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the need for effective guidance is both vital and pressing, Horvath said.

“We’ve committed so much treasure in blood and people to Iraq and Afghanistan, but overall within the Global War on Terrorism — this is a key manual within our efforts while we are at war,” Horvath said.

Horvath and the other FM 3-24 authors are trying to keep the scope of their manual broad so it will continue to have utility beyond current situations.

“There are more than 120 extended insurgencies around the world; that’s a lot of instability,” he said. “Iraq is one insurgency — it’s just one area. We’re going to be involved in insurgencies in other places, so this manual, we don’t want it to be too Iraq-centric.”

Robby Kennedy serves as a staff writer for the Fort Leavenworth Lamp newspaper.